

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1952

Before Kennan, 7 Tried

From Bullitt to Kirk, U. S. Envoys Found Moscow Post Rough Going

By Ralph Chapman

EIGHT Americans of widely different background have served as ambassadors to Moscow since the United States recognized the Soviet government in 1933. All of them, from William C. Bullitt to George F. Kennan, whose recall was demanded by the Kremlin on Oct. 3, went to Russia with high hopes of establishing friendly relations between the two nations, and none was successful.

Mr. Bullitt, who was one of the leaders in the campaign for American recognition of the Soviet Union, took equipment to outfit two Russian baseball teams. Last month a Russian writer said that his countrymen had invented the game.

Mr. Kennan, who accompanied Mr. Bullitt when the latter became the first American envoy to the Communist capital, learned to speak Russian fluently and has a deep knowledge of the country's literature and history. Despite this, when he returned later as ambassador he found the atmosphere in Moscow "icy cold" and, reminding reporters in Berlin of his internment in Germany during World War II, said:

"Had the Nazis permitted us to walk the streets without any right to talk to any Germans, that would be precisely how we have to live today in Moscow."

A Wearing Job

No previous ambassador spoke so freely for publication but cables to the State Department, made public in Washington, demonstrate that the post has not been a happy one. As early as April 6, 1945, when the war was still going on and Russia was our ally, Ambassador Averell Harriman was telling the State Department:

"Russia's daily affronts are intolerable."

In 1948 Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, who succeeded Mr. Harriman, sent a message to Washington that said in part:

"There are few Americans here and during recent months, through no desire of our own, our contacts with Soviet citizens have been

limited purely to official relations and we depend on each other for companionship and normal social relations."

A naval hero, Adm. Alan G. Kirk, followed that military leader, as occupant of Spaso House, site of the American embassy in Moscow. Soon after he left for the United States in October, 1951, he was accused by "New Times," a Russian magazine, of violation of "elementary decencies and obligations." Almost exactly eleven months later "Pravda" charged that Mr. Kennan had "violated certain elementary rules obligatory on diplomats . . ."

After he had finished his twenty-seven-month tour of duty, Adm. Kirk, observed mildly that "It's an experience you have to go through to appreciate. When it's over, you have another look at life."

Mrs. Kirk wrote a book, "Postmarked Moscow," about that experience and proved to be as "diplomatic" as the Admiral.

"There are other regions in the world," she wrote, "where conditions are far, far worse than in Russia."